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AUTHOR	Freeman, Donald
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ABSTRACT

The ongoing activities of program evaluation in the College of Education at Michigan State University are described in terms of three major phases of the evaluation: data collection; data analysis and reporting; and internal program reviews. Descriptions are included of the Graduate and Undergraduate Education Policy Committees, Office of Program Evaluation, evaluators of individual undergraduate programs, the Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee, other researchers and evaluators, and college administrators. Data collection models considered include the conceptual framework for undergraduate programs, data collection instruments, sampling plans, and the evaluation of graduate programs. Procedures for data analyses and reporting include specifics on reporting results. Ongoing reviews and periodic, comprehensive reviews are necessary to communicate accurately to program faculty and administrators the program evaluation findings. (CB)

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Research and Evaluation in Teacher Education

Program Evaluation Series No. 10

OVERVIEW: PROGRAM EVALUATION
IN THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Donald Freeman

Department of Teacher Education
and
Office of Program Evaluation

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Program Evaluation Series No. 10

OVERVIEW: PROGRAM EVALUATION IN THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Donald Freeman

Overview: Program Evaluation in the College of Education at Michigan State University

Program evaluation in the College of Education at Michigan State University is an ongoing, cooperative endeavor involving numerous groups and individuals. This report begins with a brief description of the roles of the contributing members. It then describes ongoing activities across the three major phases of program evaluation - (a) data collection, (b) data analysis and reporting, and (c) internal program reviews.

PARTICIPANTS

Graduate and Undergraduate Education Policy Committees: The college bylaws call for the Graduate Education Policy Committee (GEPC) to review and evaluate all graduate programs offered by the College of Education and stipulate that the Undergraduate Education Policy Committee (UEPC) should assume the same responsibilities in regard to undergraduate programs. Both committees include two elected representatives from each department, a department chair, and a representative of the Dean's Office.

The criteria and procedures that serve as the framework for periodic reviews of graduate programs are described in a GEPC policy statement adopted in January, 1984. The first review of this type was conducted in 1984-85 and focused on graduate programs in K-12 administration. A second review is currently underway for three programs offered by the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education.

During the 1984-85 academic year, the Undergraduate Education Policy Committee developed a statement of guidelines and procedures for periodic

reviews of undergraduate programs. These were approved as a formal UEPC policy statement in May, 1985. It is anticipated that these reviews will begin in the 1986-87 academic year.

Office of Program Evaluation: In 1980, the Dean of the College of Education created the Office of Program Evaluation (OPE) to coordinate the evaluation of all undergraduate and graduate programs offered by the College. Its purposes include:

(1) to provide a substantive information base for faculty deliberations focusing on the continued development and improvement of programs, including...

  (a) periodic program reviews monitored by the Graduate and Undergraduate Education Policy Committees, and

  (b) ongoing program reviews conducted by program faculty and coordinators.

(2) to provide technical assistance or other forms of support for individuals engaged in program evaluation or related research activities

(3) to contribute to the research on teacher education.

Evaluators of Individual Undergraduate Programs: In the fall of 1981, Michigan State introduced four new teacher preparation programs as alternatives to the traditional program. At that same time, five faculty members accepted appointments (1/4 time each) as evaluators of each of the five teacher preparation programs. These individuals (1) design and conduct evaluation studies that are unique to their programs (e.g., studies of the match between program goals and instruction), and (2) work with other evaluators in designing and using program evaluation instruments and procedures that are common to all programs (e.g., entry-level questionnaires and interviews).

Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee: Soon after the new teacher preparation programs were introduced, the Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee (UPEC) was created. Its purpose is to provide continuity among those responsible for the evaluation of undergraduate programs. The UPEC includes

members of the Office of Program Evaluation staff, the Assistant Dean for Teacher Education, and the five individuals who serve as evaluators of individual programs. The committee plays a central role in the design of program evaluation instruments and procedures and provides a forum for discussing evaluation issues and findings.

Other Researchers and Evaluators: In addition to the ongoing evaluation assignments noted above, other MSU faculty conduct independent research or evaluation studies that contribute to the information base considered in program reviews. Examples of studies of this type that have been completed since 1980 include: (a) across-program evaluations of three undergraduate courses - educational psychology, reading methods, and social studies methods; (b) follow-up studies of graduates of two M.A. programs in special education; (c) an ethnographic analysis of students' acquisition of professional knowledge; (d) an investigation of the influence of MSU's teacher preparation programs on teacher candidates' development of an international perspective; and, (e) a study of how prospective teachers learn to make interactive decisions.

College Administrators: Various college administrators also play an active role in program evaluation. The Associate Dean for Administrative Services oversees the program evaluation function in the College. The Assistant Dean for Teacher Education is actively involved in the evaluation of undergraduate programs and serves as the Dean's representative on the Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee. Department chairs allocate faculty resources to program evaluation and oversee the implementation of recommendations resulting from program reviews.

DATA COLLECTION

For a variety of reasons, information collected by the Office of Program Evaluation and other evaluators in support of reviews of undergraduate programs is more comprehensive than that collected in support of reviews of graduate

programs. The undergraduate data collection plan traces the progress of teacher candidates from the time they enter a program until five or six years after they graduate. The graduate data collection plan, on the other hand, provides a cross-sectional rather than a longitudinal data base and focuses primarily on follow-up studies of program graduates. Therefore, the two data collection models will be considered independently.

Conceptual Framework for Undergraduate Programs: The conceptual framework for the evaluation of undergraduate teacher preparation programs is illustrated in Figure 1 on page 5. The basic question that drives data collection at the undergraduate level is, "How do students change as they progress through each of Michigan State's five teacher preparation programs?" In more specific terms, "What changes occur between program entry and program exit across three general categories of student outcomes - (a) acquisition of professional knowledge; (b) competence in teaching performance; and, (c) educational orientations and beliefs?" Subquestions include the following: "Do changes in student outcomes vary in predictable ways as a function of the alternative teacher preparation program in which the candidate participated?," "Do these changes endure over time?" Although the primary focus is on student outcomes (i.e., products), process variables are also considered. The basic question that guides the analysis of process variables is, "To what extent have stated program goals and objectives been adequately addressed in the program?"

The central questions in the undergraduate program evaluation plan were identified by the Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee during its initial year of operation. At that time, tentative agreements were also reached regarding who would assume major responsibility for addressing each question - the Office of Program Evaluation, individual program evaluators, or both.

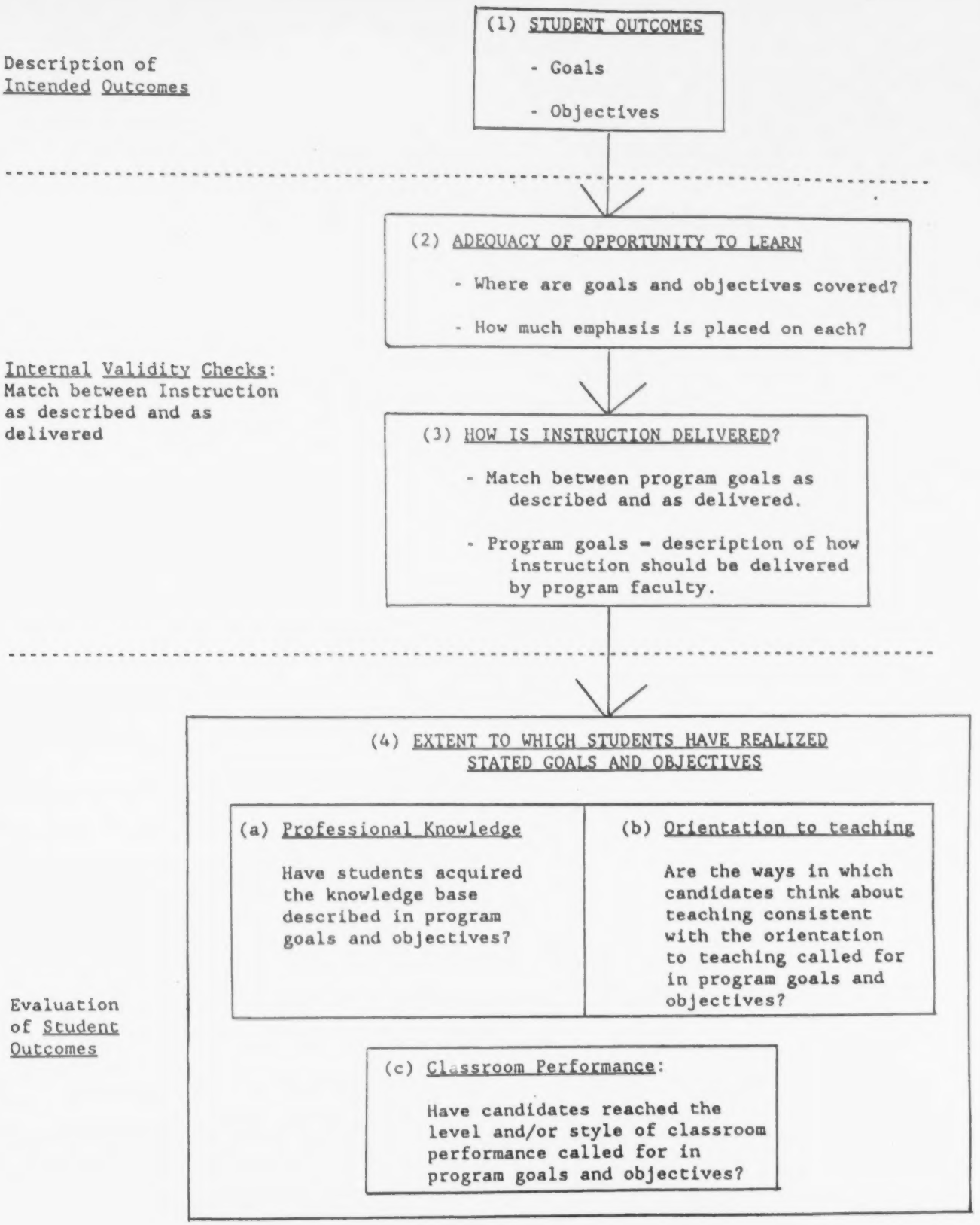
(1) STUDENT OUTCOMES
- Goals
- Objectives
Description of Intended Outcomes
(2) ADEQUACY OF OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN
- Where are goals and objectives covered?
- How much emphasis is placed on each?
Internal Validity Checks: Match between Instruction as described and as delivered
(3) HOW IS INSTRUCTION DELIVERED?
- Match between program goals as described and as delivered.
- Program goals - description of how instruction should be delivered by program faculty.
(4) EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS HAVE REALIZED STATED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
(a) Professional Knowledge
Have students acquired the knowledge base described in program goals and objectives?
(b) Orientation to teaching
Are the ways in which candidates think about teaching consistent with the orientation to teaching called for in program goals and objectives?
(c) Classroom Performance:
Have candidates reached the level and/or style of classroom performance called for in program goals and objectives?
Evaluation of Student Outcomes

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Undergraduate Program Evaluation

These initial agreements were summarized in a document entitled, "Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee: Functional Organization" (UPEC, 1982). Since that time, the specific ways in which the central questions have been addressed have been shaped by three major sources of input: (a) interviews involving representatives of various target audiences, (b) ongoing deliberations of the Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee and (c) ongoing interactions with program faculty and coordinators.

In target audience interviews conducted in 1982, participants were asked to describe information they and their colleagues would be likely to use. Target audiences that were represented included: program faculty and administrators, college administrators, chairs of relevant College committees, alumni, K-12 school administrators, and members of the Michigan Department of Education. The results played a major role in the UPEC's identification of data that is collected across all programs. [See "Undergraduate Program Evaluation Model: Data Collection Activities Common to All Programs" (UPEC, 1983)].

Data Collection Instruments: The undergraduate data collection plan is based on two distinct types of data collection instruments. One subset includes instruments selected or developed by program faculty to provide measures of particular concern to individual programs (e.g., the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is used in two of the five programs). The other subset includes instruments developed by the Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee to provide a common, comparative baseline for interpreting the results for each program. Each instrument in this subset was developed with extensive input from program faculty.

At present, the set of common instruments includes three questionnaire surveys and two interview schedules - an entry questionnaire survey and interview schedule, an exit questionnaire survey and interview schedule, and a short-term follow-up questionnaire survey. A common schedule has also been

developed for interviewing students who have elected to discontinue their participation in a teacher preparation program prior to graduation. Within the next two years, three instruments will be added to the list of surveys that are common to all programs - a short term follow-up interview schedule, a questionnaire survey of supervisors of program graduates, and a long-term follow-up questionnaire.

Figure 2 on the next page provides an overview of topics that are covered in each instrument and highlights the repeated measures that are a part of the longitudinal design. As this figure indicates, the five instruments that are common to all programs provide a diverse array of information. Collectively, they provide a fairly clear sense of who our students are and why they have chosen teaching as a career. Some sections of each questionnaire and each interview also provide data related to the three major categories of student outcomes described earlier in this report. This set of instruments is the primary data source for analyses of changes in orientations to teaching and educational beliefs. It also provides self-ratings of teaching performance and perceptions of sources of professional knowledge needed for teaching. Therefore, analyses focusing on the acquisition of professional knowledge and changes in teaching performance draw upon these sources of information as well as the data provided by observation instruments and written examinations developed by the faculty in each program.

Sampling Plan: A sampling plan was devised in 1984 to: (a) make the data collection phase of program evaluation more manageable, and (b) provide an organizational structure for completing data analyses. As illustrated in Figure 3 on page 9, a sample, rather than a census of all teacher candidates, completes the full set of longitudinal instruments - entry questionnaires and interviews, exit questionnaires and interviews, and follow-up questionnaires and interviews.

Topics	ENTRY: Survey	ENTRY: Interview	EXIT: Survey	EXIT: Interview	FOLLOW-UP: Short-range	FOLLOW-UP: Long-range *
(a) self-ratings of teaching skills	X		X		X	
(b) orientations to teaching	X	X	X	X		X
(c) educational beliefs	X		X			X
(d) college background	X		X			
(e) reasons for choosing teaching career	X	X				
(f) career plans/aspirations	X		X	X		
(g) perceived sources of professional knowledge	X				X	
(h) critique of program			X	X	X	X
(i) employment history					X	X
(j) job satisfaction					X	X
(k) graduate education					X	X
(l) demographics	X				X	
(m) high school activities	X					
(n) high school course work	X					
(o) reasons for choosing program alternative		X				
(p) quality of academic advice			X			
(q) program's contribution to skill development					X	
(r) professional honors and awards						X

Figure 2. Topic Outlines - Undergraduate Evaluation Instruments

* expected date of completion = fall, 1986

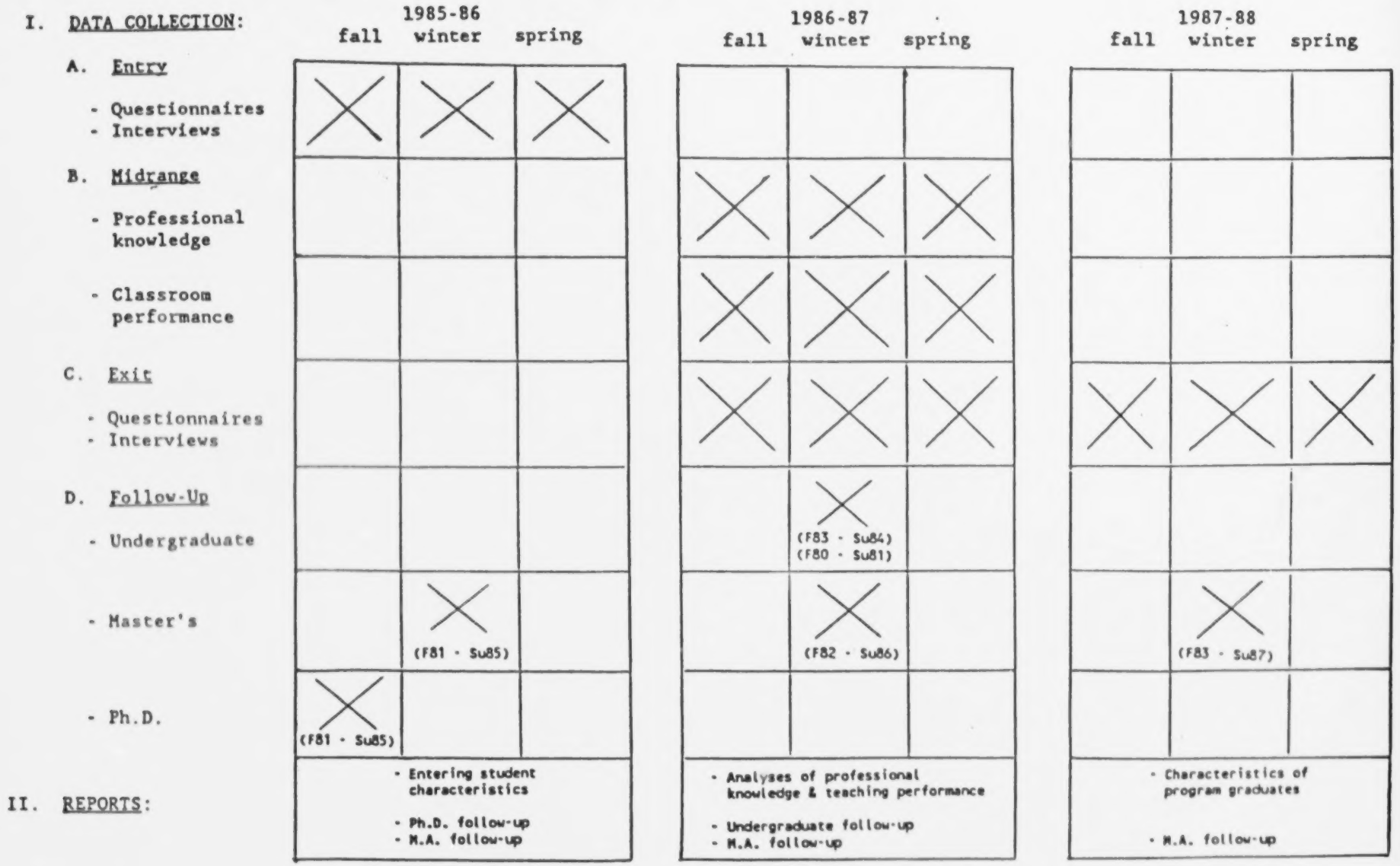

Figure 3. Program Evaluation Sampling Plan - Cycle One

The sample is determined by a three year cycle plan. All students who enroll in TE 200 during the 1985-86 academic year will serve as the designated sample for cycle 1, all who enroll in TE 200 during the 1988-89 academic year will constitute the sample for cycle 2, and so forth. All students in the designated sample will be asked to complete four questionnaires - entry, exit, short-term and long-term follow-up surveys. A randomly selected subsample will also be asked to participate in three interviews - entry, exit, and follow-up. Students who enroll in TE 200 during an off-year (e.g., 1986-87 or 1987-88) will complete only the exit and short-term follow-up questionnaires.

Evaluation of Graduate Programs: As noted earlier, comprehensive program reviews monitored by the Graduate Education Policy Committee play a central role in the evaluation of graduate programs. Data collection activities sponsored by the Office of Program Evaluation or other evaluators working at this level focus primarily on the provision of information that will contribute to these reviews.

Data considered in the review of M.A. programs include follow-up studies of graduates of M.A. programs. These are coordinated by the Office of Program Evaluation and are conducted during the year in which a program is reviewed by the GEPC. M.A. follow-up questionnaires are tailored to the unique characteristics of each program and are mailed to a census of all who graduated from the program during the preceding five years.

Data considered in the review of Ed.S./Ph.D. programs are derived from three sources: (a) a survey administered by the MSU Graduate School at the time candidates complete their programs, (b) information included in University records or compiled by the Student Affairs Office of the College, and (c) follow-up studies of program graduates conducted once every three years by the Office of Program Evaluation.

The Graduate Education Policy Committee, its program review committees, and other members of the faculty have a major voice in the design of M.A. and

Ph.D. follow-up surveys. Topics considered in one or both of these surveys include: employment histories, indices of job satisfaction, descriptions of professional accomplishments, program ratings, critiques of specific features of a program (e.g., comprehensive examinations), and recommendations for program improvements.

DATA ANALYSES AND REPORTING

In addition to structuring data collection activities, the three year cycle plan provides an organizational structure for data analyses and reporting at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. As shown in Figure 3, data analyses during the first year of the three year cycle focus on (1) characteristics of students entering teacher preparation programs and (2) follow-up studies of graduates of Ed.S./Ph.D. programs. Analyses during the second year focus on (1) the results of short- and long-term follow-up studies of alumni of undergraduate programs and (2) investigations of the extent to which teacher candidates acquire the professional knowledge and teaching skills described in undergraduate program goals. Attention in the third year shifts to characteristics of students at the time they complete an undergraduate program and include longitudinal analyses of changes in educational orientations and beliefs. During each of the three years in the cycle the OPE also analyzes data from follow-up studies of graduates of the M.A. programs being reviewed that year by the Graduate Education Policy Committee.

The data from questionnaire surveys are analyzed in two distinct phases. In the initial phase, simple frequency distributions of responses to each questionnaire item are generated. These distributions are reviewed by the committees who are most likely to use this information (e.g., Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee; Undergraduate or Graduate Education Policy Committees; program review committees established by the GEPC or UEPC). The primary intent of these preliminary reviews is to identify secondary analyses

that will provide useful information for program faculty. During the second phase of data analysis, secondary analyses identified in phase one are completed by the Office of Program Evaluation staff and a summary report based on both phases of data analysis is prepared.

The analysis of undergraduate student interviews also occurs in two phases. In phase one, evaluators of individual programs prepare a summary of results for their program. These results are then discussed by the UPEC in an attempt to determine what across-program comparisons, if any, are likely to provide useful information for program faculty. These comparisons are then completed and reported by the Office of Program Evaluation staff.

Reporting Results: Reports of program evaluation findings are addressed to one of three distinct audiences - survey participants, program faculty and administrators, and/or external audiences. The first report for a given data set highlights some of the preliminary findings and is circulated to survey participants. The second report is prepared for program faculty. It provides a more comprehensive summary and is based on the results of secondary analyses of the data as well as simple frequency distributions.

When appropriate, short reports are also prepared to highlight evaluation findings of general interest to faculty, administrators or alumni. These are circulated to alumni via the College of Education's Alumni Newsletter or to the faculty through the College of Education Update.

Program evaluators also contribute to the research literature in teacher education. OPE staff and individual program evaluators make frequent presentations at national and regional conferences and occasionally prepare manuscripts for refereed journals. The Office has also created its own publication series.

During the 1984-85 academic year, for example, members of the OPE staff and individual program evaluators presented papers at the Mid-Western Educational Research Association meeting in Chicago; the joint meeting of the Evaluation Research Society and the Evaluation Network in San Francisco; the annual meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators in Las Vegas; the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in Denver; and, the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Chicago. During that same year, one manuscript was published in a refereed journal (Book, Freeman, & Brousseau, 1985) and four papers were added to the OPE's publication series (e.g., Little, 1984).

REVIEW OF PROGRAM EVALUATION FINDINGS

Faculty responsible for the design and implementation of program evaluation at MSU recognize that the program evaluation effort will succeed only if the information that is collected and reported makes a substantive contribution to deliberations focusing on the continued development and improvement of programs. Formal and informal communication networks have therefore been established to provide systematic communication of program evaluation findings to program faculty and administrators.

Ongoing Reviews: The likelihood that program evaluation findings will play a prominent role in program development and improvement is enhanced by the fact that the formal communication network provides for (1) immediate reviews of specific sets of findings and (2) periodic, comprehensive reviews of the complete evaluation data base for each program.

Various college committees provide the forums for immediate reviews of specific sets of evaluation findings. Reports prepared for undergraduate program faculty, for example, are initially reviewed in a joint meeting of the Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee and the individuals who serve as coordinators of the five teacher preparation programs. When appropriate, the coordinators and/or individual program evaluators then present pertinent findings and/or full reports to the program's faculty.

Periodic, Comprehensive Reviews: As noted earlier, college bylaws stipulate that the Graduate and Undergraduate Education Policy Committees are responsible for reviewing and evaluating all programs offered by the College. Program review committees established and monitored by the GEPC or UEPC provide the stage for periodic reviews of the complete evaluation data base for each program. The UEPC plan stipulates that every undergraduate program will be reviewed at least once every six years; the GEPC plan calls for more frequent reviews of graduate programs, perhaps as often as once every three years.

In accord with GEPC or UEPC policies, program review committees contemplate program modifications and improvements in such areas as: (a) admissions standards and procedures, (b) academic advising and other forms of support for students, (c) the program's curriculum, (d) faculty and administrative assignments, (e) program evaluation procedures, and (f) program resources.

The Office of Program Evaluation and individual program evaluators provide the program review committee with copies of all pertinent evaluation reports. When requested to do so, the OPE also supplements these reports with secondary analyses of the data. This and other information compiled by members of the program review committee provides a substantive data base for the committee's deliberations. GEPC procedures also call for an external reviewer to analyze current program practices and to recommend program modifications. Provision of an external reviewer is strongly encouraged, but not required, in the UEPC plan.

The products of the review process include reports prepared by the program review committee, the external evaluator, and the GEPC or UEPC. Reports prepared by program review committees include: (a) recommendations for program modifications and improvements and (b) a timeline for reporting subsequent progress in implementing these recommendations.

To date, the GEPC has completed a review of graduate programs in K-12 administration; it is currently overseeing reviews of three graduate programs offered by the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education. It is anticipated that UEPC reviews of undergraduate programs will begin in the 1986-87 academic year.

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